

FIGURE 3-5 Migration to the United States from Asia. The largest numbers of Asians came from India, China, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

IMMIGRATION FROM LATIN AMERICA. About 2 million Latin Americans migrated to the United States between 1820 and 1960, and about 13 million between 1960 and 2005. Annual immigration from Latin America increased from 60,000 in the 1950s to 130,000 in the 1960s, 180,000 in the 1970s, 350,000 in the 1980s, 430,000 in the 1990s, and 400,000 since 2000.

Officially, Mexico passed Germany in 2006 as the country that has sent to the United States the most immigrants ever. Because of the large number of undocumented immigrants, Mexico probably became the leading source during the 1980s. The Dominican Republic has been the second leading source of immigrants from Latin America during the past quarter-century, followed by El Salvador (Figure 3-6).

An unusually large number of immigrants came from Mexico and other Latin American countries in the early 1990s as a

result of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, which issued visas to several hundred thousand people who entered the United States in previous years without legal documents. Counting those legalized under the 1986 act, the United States in 1991 admitted more immigrants—1.8 million—than any other year in history, with 1990 the second highest ever at 1.5 million.

The pattern of immigration to the United States changed from predominantly European to Asian and Latin American, although the reason for immigration remains the same. People are pushed by poor conditions at home and pulled by economic opportunity and social advancement in the United States. Europeans came in the nineteenth century because they saw the United States as a place to escape from the pressure of land shortage and rapid population increase. Similar motives exist today for people in Asia and Latin America. Several Caribbean countries in stage 2 of the demographic transition are transferring the equivalent of most of their annual natural increase in population to the United States.

Although the motives for moving to the United States are similar, the country has changed over time. Unfortunately, people in less developed countries, the United States is no longer a sparsely settled, economically booming country with a large supply of unclaimed land. In 1912, New Mexico and Arizona were admitted as the forty-seventh and forty-eighth states. Thus, for the first time in its history, all the contiguous territory of this country was a "united" state (other than the District of Columbia). This symbolic closing of the frontier meant to many Americans that the country no longer had space to accommodate an unlimited number of immigrants.

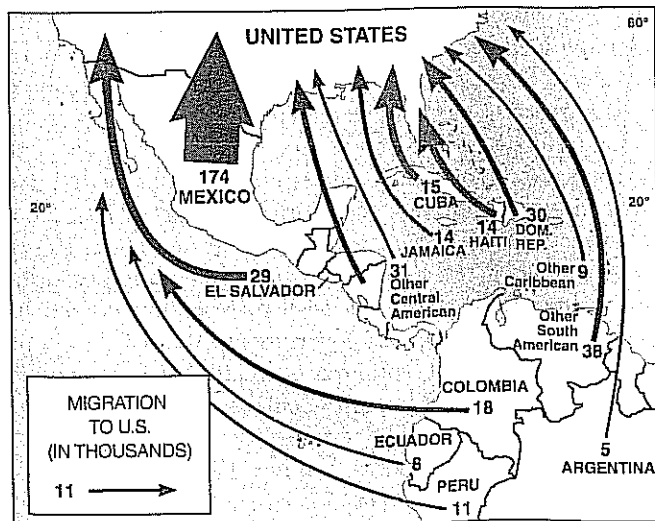


FIGURE 3-6 Migration to the United States from Latin America. Mexico has been the largest source of immigrants to the United States in recent decades. Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, and Peru are other Latin American countries that sent at least 10,000 immigrants annually to the United States during the 1990s.

Impact of Immigration on the United States

The U.S. population has been built up through a combination of immigration from Africa and England primarily during the nineteenth century, from Europe primarily during the nineteenth

century, and from Latin America and Asia primarily during the twentieth century. In the twenty-first century, the impact of immigration varies around the country.

Legacy of European Migration

The era of massive European migration to the United States ended with the start of World War I in 1914, because the war involved the most important source countries, such as Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia, as well as the United States. The level of European emigration has steadily declined since that time. Europeans accounted for one-fourth of all U.S. immigrants in the 1970s and one-seventh since 1980.

EUROPE'S DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION. Rapid population growth in Europe fueled emigration, especially after 1800. Application of new technologies spawned by the industrial revolution—such as public health, medicine, and food—produced a rapid decline in the death rate and pushed much of Europe into stage 2 of the demographic transition (high growth rate). As the population increased, many Europeans found limited opportunities for economic advancement.

To promote more efficient agriculture, some European governments forced the consolidation of several small farms into larger units. Historically, family farms often had to be divided among a great number of relatives, and the average farm was becoming too small to be profitable. In England, this consolidation policy was known as the “enclosure movement.” The enclosure movement forced millions of people to emigrate from rural areas. Displaced farmers could choose to work in factories in the large cities or migrate to the United States or another country where farmland was plentiful.

For several hundred years, the United States was Europe's safety valve. When Europe's population began to increase rapidly because of the industrial revolution, migration to the United States drained off some of the growth. As a result, people remaining in Europe enjoyed more of the economic and social benefits from the industrial revolution.

Most European countries now have very low natural increase rates (stage 4 of the demographic transition) and economies capable of meeting the needs of their people. Countries such as Germany, Italy, and Ireland, which once sent several hundred thousand people annually to the United States, now send only a few thousand. The safety valve is no longer needed.

DIFFUSION OF EUROPEAN CULTURE. The emigration of 55 million Europeans has profoundly changed world culture. As do all migrants, Europeans brought their cultural heritage to their new homes. Because of migration, Indo-European languages now are spoken by half of the world's people (as discussed in Chapter 5), and Europe's most prevalent religion, Christianity, has the world's largest numbers of adherents (see Chapter 6). European art, music, literature, philosophy, and ethics have also diffused throughout the world.

Regions that were sparsely inhabited prior to European immigration, such as North America and Australia, have become closely integrated into Europe's cultural traditions. Distinctive European political structures and economic systems have diffused to these regions.

However, Europeans also planted the seeds of conflict by migrating to regions that have large indigenous populations, especially in Africa and Asia. Europeans frequently imposed political domination on existing populations and injected their cultural values with little regard for local traditions. Economies in Africa and Asia became based on extracting resources for export to Europe rather than on using those resources to build local industry.

In more tropical climates, especially in Latin America and Asia, European migrants established plantations that grew cotton, rice, sugar, and tobacco for sale back in Europe. Europeans owned most of the plantations, but relatively few worked on them. Instead, most of the workers were native Asians or Latin Americans or were slaves from Africa. Many of today's conflicts in former European colonies result from past practices by European immigrants, such as drawing arbitrary boundary lines and discriminating among different local ethnic groups.

Undocumented Immigration to the United States

Legal immigration to the United States has reached the highest level since the early twentieth century, yet the number of people who wish to migrate to the United States is much higher than the quotas permit. Many people who cannot legally enter the United States are now immigrating illegally. Those who do so are entering without proper documents and thus are called **undocumented immigrants or unauthorized immigrants**.

No one knows how many people immigrate to the United States without proper documents. The Urban Institute placed the figure in 2005 at around 9.3 million, including 5.3 million from Mexico, 2.2 million from other Latin American countries, 1 million from Asia, one-half million from Europe and Canada, and one-half million from the rest of the world. The Pew Hispanic Center estimated a higher level of 11.1 million in 2005 and between 11.5 and 12 million in 2006.

The Pew Hispanic Center's 2005 estimate of undocumented immigrants included 5.4 million adult males, 3.9 million adult females, and 1.8 million children. In addition, 3.1 million children who were U.S. citizens were living in families with an adult who was an unauthorized immigrant. The Pew Hispanic Center researchers also found that 40 percent of the unauthorized immigrants had been in the United States for 5 years or less, 26 percent between 5 and 10 years, and 34 percent more than 10 years.

People enter or remain in the United States without authorization primarily because they wish to work but do not have permission to do so from the government. About 7.2 million of the 11.1 unauthorized immigrants in 2005 were employed, according to the Pew Hispanic Center's estimate, accounting for 5 percent of the total U.S. civilian labor force. They constituted 24 percent of workers in farming, 17 percent in cleaning, 14 percent in construction, and 12 percent in food preparation. Foreigners who fail to receive work visas have two choices if they still wish to work in the United States:

- Approximately half of the undocumented residents legally enter the country as students or tourists and then remain after they are supposed to leave.

- The other half simply slip across the border without showing a passport and visa to a border guard.

Crossing the U.S.-Mexican border illegally has not been difficult. Guards heavily patrol the official border crossings, most of which are located in urban areas such as El Paso, Texas, and San Diego, California, or along highways. However, the border is 3,600 kilometers (2,000 miles) long. It runs through sparsely inhabited regions and is guarded by only a handful of agents. A fence runs along the border but is broken in many places.

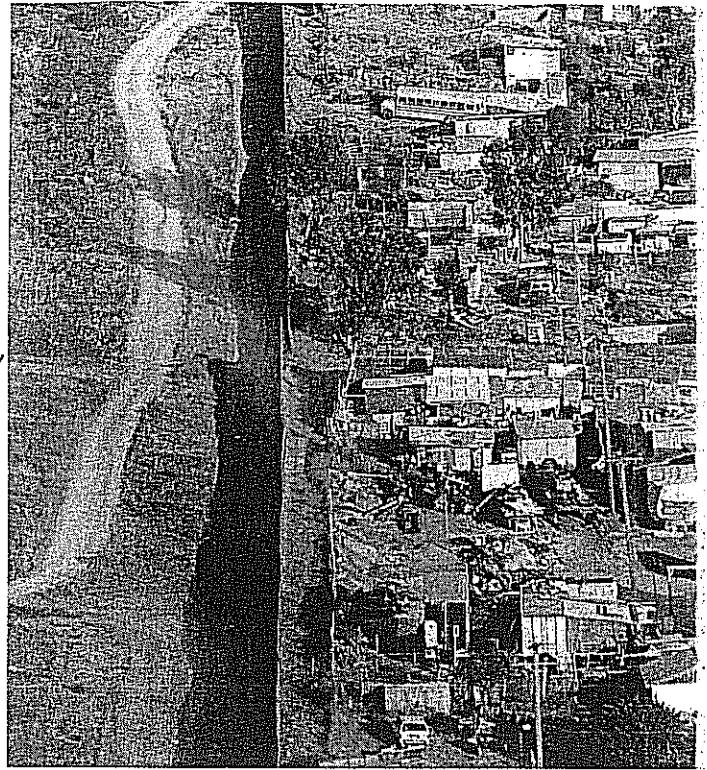
Actually finding the border is difficult in some remote areas. A joint U.S.-Mexican International Boundary and Water Commission is responsible for keeping official maps, on the basis of a series of nineteenth-century treaties. The commission is also responsible for marking the border by maintaining 276 6-foot-tall iron monuments erected in the late nineteenth century, as well as 440 15-inch-tall markers added in the 1970s.

Once in the United States, undocumented immigrants can become "documented" by purchasing forged documents for as little as \$25, including a birth certificate, alien registration card, and social security number. What happens to the minority of illegal immigrants who are caught? The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its predecessors have apprehended an average of 1.3 million undocumented immigrants per year since the 1980s. More than 90 percent of those apprehended have been Mexicans. To save time and money, the border patrols escort most of them out of the country. However, the overwhelming majority simply retrace their steps and recross the border.

Americans are divided concerning whether undocumented migration helps or hurts the country. Most Americans recognize that undocumented immigrants take jobs that no one else wants, and a majority would support some type of work-related program to make them legal. At the same time, Americans would like more effective border patrols so that fewer undocumented immigrants can get into the country.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act tried to reduce the flow of illegal immigrants to the United States. Under the law, aliens who could prove that they had lived in the United States continuously between 1982 and 1987 could become permanent resident aliens and apply for U.S. citizenship after 5 years. Seasonal agricultural workers could also qualify for permanent residence and citizenship. However, only 1.3 million agricultural workers and 1.8 million others applied for permanent residence, far fewer than government officials estimated would take advantage of the program. Other undocumented residents apparently feared that if their applications were rejected, they would be deported. Many of those who received permanent residence were later found to have purchased fraudulent papers on the black market.

At the same time, the law discouraged further illegal immigration by making it harder for recent immigrants to get jobs without proper documentation. An employer must verify that a newly hired worker can legally work in the United States and may be fined or imprisoned for hiring an undocumented worker.



U.S.-Mexico border at Tijuana. Poorly constructed houses for low income people are built adjacent to the fence on the Mexican side (right), whereas the U.S. side (left) is uninhabited.

Destination of Immigrants Within the United States

Recent immigrants are not distributed uniformly throughout the United States. More than one-half are clustered in four states including more than one-fourth in California and more than one-fourth in New York, Florida, and Texas. Coastal states were once the main entry points for immigrants, because most arrived by ship. Today, nearly all arrive by motor vehicle or airplane, but coastal states continue to attract migrants. California and Texas are the two most popular states for entry of motor vehicles from Mexico, and these states have the country's busiest airports for international arrivals.

Undocumented immigrants show a similar pattern. More than one-fourth are in California; nearly one-fourth are in Texas and Florida; another one-fourth can be found in New York, Arizona, Illinois, Georgia, or New Jersey, and the remaining one-fourth can be found in the other 42 states (Figure 3-7). Undocumented immigration is relatively high in states that are relatively accessible to Mexico, where more than 90 percent originate.

Individual states attract immigrants from different countries. Immigrants from Mexico head for California, Texas, or Illinois, whereas immigrants from Caribbean island countries head for New York or Florida. Chinese and Indians immigrate primarily to New York or California, and other Asians immigrate to California (Figure 3-8).

Proximity clearly influences some decisions, such as Mexicans preferring California or Texas, and Cubans preferring Florida. But proximity is not a factor in Poles heading for Illinois or Iran.

GLOBAL FORCES, LOCAL IMPACTS

Undocumented Immigration Viewed from the Mexican Side

From the United States, the view to the south may seem straightforward. Millions of Mexicans are trying to cross the border by whatever means, legal or otherwise, in search of employment, family reunification, and a better way of life in the United States.

The view from Mexico is more complex. Along its northern border with the United States, Mexico is the source of the undocumented immigrants. At the same time, along its southern border with Guatemala, Mexico is the destination for undocumented immigrants. When talking with its neighbor to the north, Mexicans urge understanding and sympathy for the plight of the immigrants. When talking with its neighbor to the south, Mexicans urge stronger security along the border.

Along the U.S.-Mexican border, the contrast in wealth between the two countries is apparent, even in satellite imagery. Small houses packed close together on the Mexican side face large houses with

wooded lots and swimming pools on the American side. Contrasts also exist along Mexico's southern border. Some cross into Mexico from Guatemala because they can get higher-paying jobs in tropical fruit plantations. The Suchiate River, which marks the border between Hidalgo, Mexico, and Tecum Uman, Guatemala, is sometimes only ankle deep. Immigrants from other Latin American countries, especially El Salvador and Honduras, travel through Guatemala without need of a passport in order to cross into Mexico. Although a passport is needed to cross the border from Guatemala into Mexico, hundreds of thousands do so illegally.

The ultimate destination for most undocumented immigrants into Mexico is the U.S. border. Ironically, it is easier for undocumented immigrants in the United States if they are not Mexican. Undocumented Mexicans apprehended in the United States are usually bused back across the border into Mexico and released, but

those from other countries who are apprehended in the United States are usually arrested and released with orders to appear at a court hearing. Once released, they are free to travel within the United States, blending in with other immigrants, and few show up at scheduled court hearings several months later.

Meanwhile, the millions of Mexicans living legally and illegally in the United States have constituted a powerful political and economic force back in Mexico. The Inter-American Development Bank estimated that immigrants in the United States sent \$17 billion back to Mexico in 2005, and \$28 million to other Latin American countries. Most of these remittances were used by relatives for food, clothing, and shelter, but government officials have tried to channel some of the money into development projects. The Mexican government has also faced pressure to make it easier for the millions of its citizens living in the United States to vote in elections back home.

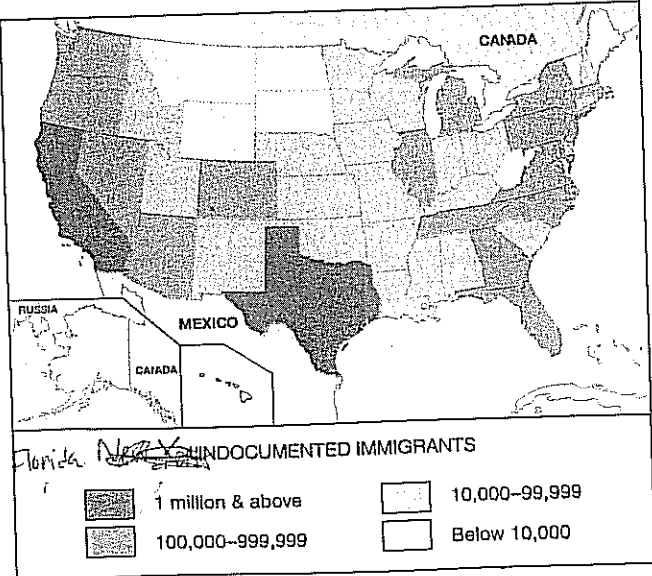


FIGURE 3-7 Destination of undocumented immigrants by U.S. states. California, Texas, and Florida are the leading destinations for undocumented immigrants.

ans for California. Immigrants cluster in communities where people from the same country previously settled. **Chain migration** is the migration of people to a specific location, because relatives or members of the same nationality previously migrated there.

Job prospects affect the states to which immigrants head. The South and West have attracted a large percentage of immigrants, because the regions have had more rapid growth in jobs than the Northeast or Midwest (see Key Issue 4). In recent years, though, many immigrants—especially Mexicans—have migrated to the Midwest to take industrial jobs shunned by Americans, such as in meatpacking and related food processing.

KEY ISSUE 3

Why Do Migrants Face Obstacles?

- Immigration policies of host countries
- Cultural problems faced while living in other countries

The principal obstacle traditionally faced by migrants to other countries was the long, arduous, and expensive passage over land or by sea. Think of the cramped and unsanitary conditions endured by nineteenth-century immi-